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President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 166 (*continued*)

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/160 and Corr.1 and Add.1)

Mr. Gounaris (Greece): I would like to align myself with the statement of the Presidency of the European Union and join previous speakers in condemning the horrendous terrorist attacks, of an unprecedented scale, that shook New York City, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania on 11 September. Our deepest sympathy goes to the families of those who perished, are missing or were wounded in the ground zero zone and the Pentagon. I would like to express our full solidarity with the Government of the United States and the American people over this tragedy, which challenges all of humanity.

As Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. George Papandreou, declared on 11 September,

> "the abhorrent terrorist attack against the American people was, in fact, an attack against free society, democracy and humanity as a whole."

The Greek people, with one voice, condemn the terrorist attacks, which are intended to create a new scheme of warfare that is universally unacceptable. Our painful experiences have made us even more sensitive on this issue. Greece unequivocally condemns the perpetrators and sponsors of such acts of barbarism, and is ready to offer the international community all possible assistance required in order to punish those responsible.

The carefully planned and coordinated attacks were directed against the innocent civilian population and intended to cause the maximum loss of life of thousands of defenceless working people of the United States as well as numerous other nationals, from all parts of the world.

There can be no doubt that the international nature and the large scale of the attack characterize it as a crime against humanity. The loss of human life, regardless of ethnicity or race, demands immediate, effective action to bring those responsible to justice and to avert any possibility of such crimes being committed again. The United Nations should spare no effort towards achieving our common goal of preventing and suppressing terrorist attacks wherever they might occur.

The United Nations, bearing prime responsibility in this fight against terrorism, has acted with speed and unity. On 12 September both the Security Council and the General Assembly adopted strong resolutions condemning the attacks and calling on all States to cooperate in bringing the perpetrators to justice. On 28 September a second and more detailed resolution was adopted by the Security Council, building on the first. The extensive deliberations of the plenary of the General Assembly underline our willingness to

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promote cooperation on this issue and pursue the implementation of these resolutions.

Our collective efforts, our global cooperation and action, are now needed, more than ever, on all levels, both nationally and internationally. The fight against terrorism should only bring the Member States of the United Nations closer to our common goals: embracing our democratic values; cherishing our freedoms; and strengthening development.

However, let me clarify that any attempt to identify this fight with one religion or equate it with one region or one race, or even to single out one country, defeats our purpose of ensuring peace and security, building more tolerance, safeguarding multiculturalism and avoiding fragmentation.

We reaffirm our commitment to join forces in the global efforts to eliminate the horror of terrorism. Greece, as a State Party to all major international antiterrorism conventions, is currently promoting — as an addition to existing legislation concerning weapons, ammunition and explosives that fully secures the criminal prosecution and punishment of those responsible for terrorist acts — a draft law to deal with specific issues of organized crime and terrorist acts. Moreover, with a series of other laws, the Greek State ensures the moral and material support of victims of terrorist acts and their families, and recognizes the right of the victims to be compensated by the State for material damage that they have sustained by reason of a terrorist act.

With our partners in the European Union, we will take all necessary steps to reinforce our efforts and pursue collective European action across all our territories, as expressed in the conclusions and plan of action of the extraordinary European Council meeting of 21 September 2001. In particular, specific legislation, within the framework of the Schengen Convention, has been adopted on the fight against terrorism, organized crime and drug smuggling and regarding the possession, acquisition, dealing and trafficking in general of firearms and ammunition by individuals or legal entities on the territory of the European Union.

However, our struggle to eradicate terrorism should not lessen our efforts for development, democracy and human rights, especially in those parts of the world where they are most needed. On the contrary, our universal efforts should go hand in hand. Our common endeavours should focus on addressing and resolving any regional crises, thus laying a solid ground for good neighbourly relations, peace and security.

In Afghanistan, at this very moment, a humanitarian crisis is unfolding. Greece has announced its humanitarian contribution, to be disbursed both bilaterally and multilaterally.

We trust that, at the beginning of this new century, the guidelines laid out by our heads of State and Prime Ministers in the Millennium Declaration

> "To take concerted action against international terrorism, and to accede as soon as possible to all the relevant international conventions" (*resolution 55/2, para. 9*)

will prevail.

Mr. Lewis (Antigua and Barbuda): Thank you, Mr. President, for your correct pronunciation of Antigua.

Since this is the first time that I have had the honour to address the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, permit me to offer congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your assumption of your high office. Your reputation of brilliance, fairness and congeniality has preceded you to the office that you hold. My delegation is confident that, under your guidance, we will have a successful and progressive fifty-sixth session.

On behalf of the Government and the people of Antigua and Barbuda, I wish to associate myself with the statement made by Mr. Simon Richards of Dominica on the topic under discussion, international measures against terrorism. My country firmly supports the points he emphasized, namely, the solidarity of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) with the international community; secondly, the nature of a global response; and, thirdly, CARICOM's pledge to support internationally agreed measures. He emphasized that the United Nations strategy had to be comprehensive and multifaceted, with the overarching goal of studying and eliminating the causes and sources of terrorism, whether they be social, economic or political.

My country likewise endorses the Security Council resolution of 12 September, which called upon

> "States to work together urgently to bring to justice the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors" (*Security Council resolution 1368 (2001), para. 3*)

of the terrorist acts of 11 September. Likewise, Antigua and Barbuda

> "*regards* such acts, like any act of international terrorism, as a threat to international peace and security". (*ibid., para. 1*)

It is even more distressing to learn that on 1 October there was another serious terrorist attack, this time in Jammu and Kashmir, where 40 people have so far died — among them women and children — while a large number of individuals remain wounded, some seriously.

Those events, and particularly those of 11 September, manifested the international dimensions of terrorism. It is, as stated by Mr. Kamalesh Sharma of India,

> "an organic whole; it would be dangerous to try to cut one of the cells out ... It is an evil that metastasizes. Terrorism must be destroyed root and branch. It is the anathema of the new century." (*A/56/PV.16*)

In conclusion, I must state that it is imperative that we address in a more meaningful manner the underlying social, economic and political problems that cause human misery; for, beyond being humanitarian, this would help to remove the atmosphere in which terrorism prospers. We must act to ensure that the entire global society lives in an environment of freedom and that it is free from fear. The fight against terrorism will be long; it will be arduous; but it is one in which we must thoroughly and completely engage ourselves.

Mr. Ecua Miko (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): There are situations and things that demand that everyone speak out.

In a corner of the world, villagers used a deaf mute, because of his physical strength, to do all the hard labour. On one occasion, he had been working for a week at cleaning the farm of a villager who had employed him. When it came time to pay him, the employer paid him $1. The deaf mute exclaimed, "Is this what you are paying me?" To which the employer responded, "But you have never said anything." So there are things one has to say. There are things that can make someone speak up. The events of 11 September cannot but make us do what we have been doing in this Hall this week.

As this is the first time that my delegation has taken part in debate at the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, allow me to convey my delegation's greetings to President Han Seung-soo, and congratulations on his election to the presidency of this session and the excellent way in which he is presiding over our work; to Mr. Harri Holkeri, on his impeccable work as President of the fifty-fifth session of the Assembly; and to Mr. Kofi Annan, on his well-deserved re-election and his report on the work of the Organization, which has elicited everyone's praise.

Judging from the number of speakers who have spoken before me from this podium — among whom I should mention in particular Mayor Rudolph Giuliani of New York, who honoured us with his presence on 1 October — I would say that on agenda item 166, entitled "Measures to eliminate international terrorism", much has been said and much remains to be said and done; for we, human beings, are the ones with the potential to eradicate terrorism, as we are the ones who have produced this virus.

Terrorism is not a natural disaster; it is the result of the minds of certain people who, besides lacking self-esteem, have no future because they lack principles.

The unthinkable terrorist acts of 11 September took place a few days before the United Nations special session devoted to children was due to begin. It had been scheduled to be held in New York from 19 to 21 September 2001.

Equatorial Guinea supports and endorses without reservation the sound and sensible proposals and recommendations that have been made by the Security Council, the General Assembly and from this very rostrum — I am referring here to Security Council resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001) and General Assembly resolution 56/1, as well as to previous relevant resolutions — to help us advance on the long, arduous and winding path that is the combat against international terrorism, with the goal of its full eradication.

In my country, we say that it is good to find and bring to justice the perpetrator of a crime, but it is

much better to resolve the problem that he has caused. Indeed, the authorities of my country spoke along these lines following the sad and horrendous events of 11 September 2001.

On 12 September, the President of the Republic, Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, who happened to be in the United States at that time, sent a message of condolences to Mr. George Bush, President of the United States of America. At the same time, the Government, following an emergency session and through an official declaration, condemned the terrorist attacks as well as terrorism in general. Subsequently it reaffirmed the Republic of Equatorial Guinea's total support for, and solidarity with, the people and the Government of the United States in these days of sadness and grief.

The Government declared three days of national mourning in memory of the victims of the tragedy, which, it noted, affected not only the United States but all human societies that have aspirations for the future based on peace, freedom, justice and democracy. Who, in one way or another, has not been affected by the destruction and the disappearance of the World Trade Center — not to mention by the other attacks? The Government put our law enforcement and security forces on high alert in order to ensure vigilance and to protect all United States nationals and interests in the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

This conflict is not one that pits the West against Islam nor some nations against others because of their faith. Terrorism is the enemy of all peoples and of all civilizations of the world, and therefore it deserves universal condemnation and the adoption of individual and collective measures to dismantle its entire financing mechanism as well as support of any kind for terrorist operations. As a result, we urgently need closer coordination and cooperation at the international level, which would consider, among other things, the necessary exchange of information to prevent and protect ourselves against these terrorist acts.

Equatorial Guinea understands that the United Nations must hold consultations at the highest level in order to set up guidelines and to establish a programme of action to combat terrorism and to ensure its eradication, as well as safeguard the values of freedom and the dignity of the human person in the face of the barbaric, irrational and perverse nature of international terrorism.

The House of Representatives of the People of Equatorial Guinea, when it met at its second session, spoke out along these lines through an institutional declaration approved on 16 September that condemned the terrorist acts of 11 September and expressed solidarity with the people of the United States. The legislative body of my country has acknowledged the danger posed by these terrorist attacks for the stability of countries and for world peace, and that efforts should be deployed to put an end to international terrorism, strictly abiding by the criteria of justice and liberty.

The House of Representatives has also expressed its complete willingness to support the Government's policies in the fight against international terrorism. Accordingly, it is prepared to approve any legal orders submitted to it through the proper channels.

As a corollary to all of these actions and events, the President of the Republic — during a solemn ecumenical gathering in support of the United States that strongly condemned terrorism and which took place at Malabo on 29 September, with broad participation on the part of political leaders, religious representatives, representatives of the diplomatic corps, of the public and private sectors and of society at large — made the following statement and asked that it be directed to the General Assembly during its consideration of the item on measures to eliminate international terrorism.

> "Today all of the State authorities, political groups, religious denominations, private-sector organizations and foreign representatives posted in our country have joined us in this ecumenical celebration, through which we highlight once again the resolute support of the people and the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea for the people and the Government of the United States. We express our solidarity with the innocent victims of the terrorist attacks of 11 September and solemnly reiterate our most firm and resolute condemnation of terrorism.
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> "Our personal — and painful — experience as a result of these tragic events, which have become a universal tragedy, and our proximity to them — because we happened to be visiting the United States with an important Government delegation at the time — makes it clear that these attacks, even if perpetrated against the United

States, are without a doubt a serious and collective affront against the values of freedom, peace, security and stability throughout the world.

"Furthermore, these terrorist attacks constitute an unprecedented threat against the ideals and principles that Equatorial Guinea shares with other peoples on this planet that devote their greatest efforts to ensuring dignity and progress for human beings, who must benefit from the progress of modern science and technology, not become its victims.

"Although the United States has been the main target of these terrorist attacks, we must recall nonetheless that among its victims were nationals of more than a third of the States Members of the United Nations.

"As a result, we have met here not only to express our solidarity with the United States, but also to reflect together and to become fully aware of the fact that, with these terrorist attacks, what is at stake is freedom and the survival of humankind as a whole.

"In this time of veritable upheaval in international peace and security, Equatorial Guinea is fully aware of the fact that — at the beginning of this twenty-first century — for the world, for civilization and for our peoples, these terrorist acts represent the greatest challenge we have faced since the end of the two world wars and the fall of the Berlin Wall. It brings home the sad reality that if we do not act decisively and in a concerted manner, we will be experiencing the beginning of global developments that could lead the planet to its own self-destruction.

"As a result, with respect to what was said by President Bush during his recent speech before the United States Congress in which he referred to the need for a world coalition against terrorism, I would add that, in the face of terrorism, either all of the peoples of the world come together within the framework of coherent and concerted action, or we will all inexorably succumb to its sadistic and inhuman plan, which takes no account of races or borders.

"From this perspective — as I said when I returned from the United States — I am in favour of a large-scale consultation at the global level and of a vigorous and exemplary response to terrorism, with a view to the global and definitive defeat of that barbaric phenomenon and to freeing ourselves from its scourge.

"Beginning on the very day of 11 September, Equatorial Guinea, under the leadership of my Government, has adopted and continues to adopt measures and strategies requiring its cooperation and participation in contributing to the efforts of the international community in the long and difficult battle that must be engaged to eradicate terrorism from the world, within the framework of the relevant resolutions and mechanisms of the United Nations, the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States, as well as all current international anti-terrorism conventions."

(*spoke in French*)

In this context and at the Central African level, the President of the Republic, Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, addressed a message to his counterparts in the subregion, in which he said:

"The terrorist attacks of 11 September in New York and Washington, D.C., have threatened international peace and security.

"As a result, Central Africa, which is devoted to the principles of solidarity, peace and stability and is concerned by these disturbing events, intends to contribute resolutely, through a coordinated strategy, to the efforts of the international community in the fight against terrorism, above and beyond measures undertaken by each State of the subregion.

"This coordination, which could lead to a declaration on a common Central African position, will allow the current Chairman of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to express his support and that of the heads of State of the subregion for the fight against terrorism, as well as their devotion to peace and stability in the subregion and throughout the world, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Treaty establishing the ECCAS and with the principles of the African Union on terrorism, peace, security and stability, which were reiterated at the summit of heads of

State in Lomé last year and most recently in Lusaka."

(*spoke in Spanish*)

In conclusion, we express the hope that our discussions, especially on this matter, will continue under the principle of the force of argument, rather than that of the argument of force.

The President: In accordance with the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 12th plenary meeting on 1 October 2001, I call on the observer of Switzerland.

Mr. Staehelin (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time that my country is speaking at this session, allow me, Sir, to convey the heartfelt congratulations of Switzerland on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. I can assure you of my delegation's full support throughout this session.

The attacks in the United States of America on 11 September are a tragedy that transcends human understanding. They are expressions of criminal violence of unprecedented horror.

On behalf of the Swiss Government and of all the people of Switzerland, I wish to express to the American people our most heartfelt sense of solidarity and friendship in this tragic ordeal. Our thoughts go to all the victims, their families and friends. We owe esteem and recognition to all those who have committed themselves so courageously and without the least hesitation to the difficult and dangerous rescue operation.

This tragedy has profoundly shocked the Swiss people. It has intolerably wounded a sister republic with which we share fundamental values. The events in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania affect us all. Although the scourge of terrorism may seem elusive, the international community is neither powerless nor defenceless. However, the effectiveness of its response depends on our unity and determination, because terrorism can be successfully countered only through considered and collective action.

This action must be based on law and on the fundamental principles that govern our democratic societies. Terrorists want to use violence to destroy the rule of law. We must not fall into the trap that they have set for us. With vision and steadfastness, our societies — which are founded on tolerance and openness — must commit themselves to the struggle against this scourge. This effort will require all those present in this Assembly to join forces. Because of its universal character and its ability to respond to global challenges, the United Nations is called upon to be the driving force in this campaign — a role that comes naturally to it.

In adopting resolution 1373 (2001), the Security Council has set the general direction of action. The Swiss Government welcomes that resolution and takes this opportunity to express its strong determination to join in the shared effort. It is already participating fully.

Switzerland has long been concerned with the fight against international terrorism. It has made action in this area a priority at both the international and national levels. Switzerland is applying the sanctions that have been imposed by the Security Council with the aim of combating the threat to peace and security posed by terrorism. In particular, it has fully and unconditionally implemented and applied resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1333 (2000).

Switzerland is party to the international instruments on this issue that have been agreed within both the United Nations and the Council of Europe. Switzerland has signed the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism in June. Although that Convention has not yet come into effect, we have started the ratification process with the aim of bringing it into effect as soon as possible. We also intend to become party to the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings in the near future.

Switzerland has also contributed actively to discussions within the United Nations on the drafting of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. It will participate in all activities concerned with future anti-terrorism instruments.

Finally, in addition to the specific multilateral and regional anti-terrorism instruments to which it is bound, Switzerland has established a network of bilateral treaties on mutual assistance in judicial and extradition matters with the aim of increasing our ability to prevent and suppress all forms of crime, including terrorism.

At the domestic level, we have a range of laws that serve actively to suppress terrorism. On 3 July, the Secretary-General published a report on measures aimed at eradicating international terrorism, which was compiled on the basis of information submitted by a number of States. It describes in exhaustive detail the measures that Switzerland has taken, as well as the laws and regulations which it has adopted concerning the prevention and suppression of acts of international terrorism.

It must be emphasized that Switzerland has a law on international mutual assistance in criminal matters which permits it — even in the absence of treaty agreements — to cooperate with all other States. Moreover, Switzerland is one of the few States to make use of the "immediate transmission of information". By this means, information obtained in investigations conducted in Switzerland can be transmitted to a foreign authority and used in investigations conducted abroad. Finally, Switzerland is able to take very rapid provisional measures. For example, it can order the freezing of bank accounts as soon as a foreign authority requests such cooperation. These measures are critical when the need arises to block financial transactions that benefit terrorist organizations, and they help to prevent the abuse of Swiss financial institutions by terrorist groups.

In this context, please allow me to be absolutely clear on one last point: Swiss banking secrecy laws have never protected and will never protect terrorists or their financial transactions. The banks are bound by criminal law — and this, of course, covers terrorism — to provide full information to the judicial authorities. Switzerland provides effective and prompt international cooperation in criminal matters, in particular, by blocking the relevant accounts and deposits. Moreover, Swiss banks are obliged to report to the authorities any justifiable suspicions they have concerning transactions related to organized crime and terrorism. There is no banking secrecy when it comes to the fight against terrorism.

It is of fundamental importance that we work together with the greatest determination to combat the scourge of terrorism. Terrorism threatens all of us and together we must make sure that it is defeated. There is no justification whatsoever for acts such as those committed on 11 September. However, the recourse to force alone will not suffice to eliminate terrorism. In the long term, there exists no other way to ensure international security and to prevent such despicable acts than to reinforce international cooperation with a view to eradicating poverty, preventing and resolving conflicts and effectively promoting human rights and the rule of law. To this end, the international community must act more decisively than ever.

The worldwide reaction to the abominable acts to which we were all witness must prompt us to pursue the fight against terrorism without respite. We must do so in memory of the victims. We must do so to preserve the primacy of law over force, and for the blossoming of our democratic societies.

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 3369 (XXX), of 10 October 1975, I now call on the observer for the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Mr. Lamani (Organization of the Islamic Conference): I would like at the outset to extend to you, Sir, on behalf of the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, our sincere congratulations on your election as President of the General Assembly at this session. We have full confidence that the work of this Assembly will be successful under your wise leadership.

In the press statements made by its Secretary-General, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) has condemned the criminal terrorist attacks perpetrated against the United States on 11 September 2001. They were completely against all human values, creeds and religions, prominent among which is Islam, which values the sanctity of human life and holds that whoever unjustly kills one soul kills all people. We must emphasize here that Islam is innocent of all forms of terrorism and strongly condemns those who perpetrated these horrendous crimes in the name of Islam, regardless of how they attempt to justify their acts. The OIC has continually denounced all forms of terrorism in accordance with the moral and human principles in which its member States believe. Those principles have roots in the sublime religions, legacies and traditions of these States, all of which call for eliminating all forms of injustice, aggression and intolerance.

Terrorism threatens the life of innocent people and their property, violates the sovereignty of States and constitutes a danger for the rights of people. On the basis of the international consensus to fight terrorism in all its forms and to put an end to its causes, the

Secretary-General of the OIC supports the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, which were adopted unanimously, and urges the member States of the OIC to continue to work positively towards the implementation of those resolutions. The emergency ministerial meeting of the OIC, to be held in Doha, Qatar, on 10 October, is a form of support for international efforts to combat terrorism. In this connection, we established an OIC treaty to combat international terrorism, which was adopted by the Foreign Ministers of OIC member States at their twenty-sixth session, in Burkina Faso, in 1999. That treaty calls upon member States, inter alia, to refrain from providing any form of assistance or support to terrorists, including shelter or financial support.

The Security Council and the General Assembly have issued a number of important resolutions calling for an end to the scourge of terrorism. These resolutions, in addition to the many resolutions adopted by regional organizations — among which is the organization I have the honour of representing here — attempt to establish an international framework under the auspices of the United Nations. The resolutions take a united stance on international terrorism and are conducive to respect for international laws and the purposes and principles that all humanity agreed to in the Charter of the United Nations.

We all know that there are many problems at the international level. The spread of extremism and terrorist acts all over the world have underscored the fact that all forms of terrorism are one and the same and therefore should not be tolerated. We have to emphasize here that extremism, violence and terrorism are international phenomena; they are not limited to a specific people, race or religion. The international community is one community, based on multiculturalism, multiple religions and multiple ideologies. This pluralism should not undermine the unity of the international community. International relations should be based on the positive coexistence of States and on a joint appreciation of the different contributions and achievements of different societies.

Since the end of the cold war, some have spoken about conflict between civilizations. Some are still talking about that idea. The issue is one of significance for the whole of humanity and its future. Convinced of the importance of a dialogue among civilizations, Islamic countries were the first to present a draft resolution on the subject to the Assembly.

In condemning terrorism, we should also condemn any attempt to blur the distinction between terrorism and the legitimate struggle of peoples under colonial rule or foreign occupation. The struggle of such people to achieve national liberation and self-determination, in accordance with the principles of international law and the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, does not constitute terrorism. In this context, we reaffirm our support for the holding of an international conference, under the auspices of the United Nations, to define terrorism; to distinguish between terrorism and the rights of people to resist foreign occupation and achieve national liberation; and to take all measures to eradicate terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

As members of the international community, we must continue with this effort against terrorism and ensure that we do not approach this very dangerous phenomenon with double standards. We should continue our worthwhile attempt to support the dialogue between civilizations. We should be responsible enough to face up to any attempt to create discord, disunity and hatred between peoples. We should all support coexistence and cooperation between different peoples and cultures as a basis of that dialogue.

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/265 of 24 August 1994, I now call on the Observer for the Sovereign Military Order of Malta.

Mr. Linati-Bosch (Sovereign Military Order of Malta): I would first like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on behalf of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, on your election as President of the General Assembly during its fifty-sixth session. I am sure that your excellent qualifications and strong commitment will ensure the efficacy of our work at such a difficult time.

The Order of Malta condemns terrorism in all its manifestations. We felt as though we were living in a nightmare when, on the morning of 11 September, New York and Washington became the victims of criminal acts. It is true that, after 11 September, no one feels safe from terrorism. However, I would like to condemn not only the attack of 11 September, but all the manifestations of terrorism, violence and intolerance

that convulse our world. International terrorism defies international security, and, in consequence, the international community has the right to defend itself in accordance with international public law.

We cannot consider what happened in New York and Washington as isolated incidents. The excellent report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, and his report on measures to eliminate international terrorism, mentioned many geographical areas where peace and human rights are violated, and there is no need for me to list them all again. Security Council resolution 1368 (2001) reaffirmed the right to collective self-defence. That resolution, adopted on 12 September, and the General Assembly resolution adopted on the same day, constitute the starting point for the prevention and suppression of terrorist activities, wherever they appear. Effective measures must be adopted if we are not to succumb to terror, intolerance, fanaticism and fear but, on the contrary, to build a stable system of morals and civic honour.

We hear the word "globalization" every day. We must be aware that terrorism signifies the globalization of fear and contempt for international law, humanitarian law and the law of conventions. This is a transgression that cannot remain without an adequate response, and it involves the responsibility of all of us.

We know that sovereignty signifies independence from any other subject of international law and, in consequence, we must consider that it is the duty of every country to fight terrorism in its own territory and, at the same time, to participate in international action against international terrorism. Let there be no more sanctuaries for terrorists.

One activity of the Order of Malta is especially disrupted by terrorism. I am referring to its humanitarian activity and to the difficulties that its humanitarian personnel face in the accomplishment of their mission when taking part in peacekeeping operations — difficulties that, on some occasions, hinder their presence even when this presence is requested by national Governments or international entities. We are in favour of the protection of civilians in armed conflicts, but it must be acknowledged that duly accredited humanitarian personnel also merit effective protection when their presence has been requested or authorized.

The United Nations is the best representation of the international community, and as such it is the responsibility of the Organization, working together with States, regional organizations, communities, other entities and even individuals, to lead the fight against all transnational crime. In this regard, the Sovereign Military Order of Malta expresses its commitment to collaborate and to share responsibility in the struggle against terrorism.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda item 166.

We have had an unusually long, but important and constructive, debate during the past five days. It was unprecedented in the history of the United Nations for 167 Member States and 4 observers to participate in a debate on a single agenda item. This fact alone eloquently demonstrates how seriously all Member States, and the whole international community, regard the acts of terrorism that took place on 11 September. We did so because we all believed that they were not only attacks on the United States, but assaults on the whole civilized world.

As we all know, the agenda item 166, entitled "Measures to eliminate international terrorism" has long been on the agenda of the Sixth Committee. However, in the light of the importance and urgency of the issue in the aftermath of the tragedy of 11 September, we decided that the debate on this item should be held in plenary meeting while consideration of the technical aspects of the item remain within the purview of the Sixth Committee.

Before our debate began, we had an invaluable opportunity to listen to Mayor Rudolph Giuliani of New York, our host city, who gave us a very clear perspective on the terrorist attacks and conveyed the expectations that United States citizens, particularly the citizens of New York, have of the United Nations at this critical time. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mayor Giuliani once again and offer our very best wishes for our host city's speedy recovery.

During our deliberations, all participants joined wholeheartedly in condemning the terrorist attacks of 11 September, reaffirming resolution 56/1 of 12 September 2001, in which the General Assembly condemned these attacks in the strongest terms and called for international cooperation to bring to justice the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of the outrages.

Member States voiced the view that international terrorism constitutes a threat to international peace and security, as well as a crime against humanity. Undoubtedly, international terrorism is one of the formidable challenges to the world community in the twenty-first century, and the United Nations should play the key role in intensifying international efforts to eliminate such terrorism.

In this regard, I wish to recall that the General Assembly has taken important steps, by adopting in 1994 the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism and by adopting its supplementary Declaration in 1996. The Security Council has also taken initiatives, such as the adoption of resolutions 1269 (1999) of 19 October 1999, 1368 (2001) of 12 September 2001 and 1373 (2001) of 28 September 2001, which not only condemned all forms of terrorism but also specified measures to be taken by Member States to prevent and suppress terrorist acts.

Member States recognized the urgency of dealing with all forms and manifestations of international terrorism and those who harbour and support the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of international terrorism. They stressed the need to enhance international cooperation and to promptly take all necessary measures to prevent and suppress terrorist activities.

Member States concurred in the view that a primary task facing the international community at present is to ensure that an effective legal framework for the prevention and elimination of international terrorism is in place. To this end, I call upon all Member States that have not yet done so to become, as a matter of priority, parties to the existing international conventions relating to terrorism. In this context, it is noteworthy that the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice recently adopted the revised draft action plan for the implementation of the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice. Many Member States also expressed their intention to take necessary measures to implement international conventions within their domestic jurisdiction.

I would like to take this opportunity to urge Member States to accelerate the work of the General Assembly, with a view to the early conclusion of the pending conventions on international terrorism, in order to enhance the capacity of the international community to combat terrorism. As President of the General Assembly, I also kindly request the Sixth Committee to expedite its work and submit its report to the General Assembly as early as possible, preferably by 15 November 2001.

Finally, I recall that during our debate Member States shared the view that the international community should resolve to fight terrorism as a phenomenon separate from any religion or ethnic group. In this regard, the necessity for dialogue among civilizations was stressed. Also, some representatives suggested a high-level conference on international terrorism, while some others called upon the international community to address the root causes of terrorism. At the same time, the need for a clearer definition of terrorism was raised for our further consideration.

Our week-long deliberation was instrumental in reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in dealing with global, high-profile issues such as international terrorism. It is my sincere hope that the United Nations and the international community will take further necessary measures to combat international terrorism, building on the deliberations we have had for the last five days.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 166.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.